

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 July 2021 7:57 AM
To: Mansfield Electorate Office
Cc: Community Support and Services Committee; Minister for Communities and Housing
Subject: To Community Support and Services Committee (CC my local MP): Submission on the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

Dear Corrine McMillan MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee, cc my local MP -

I'd like to comment on both the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to share something with you: a snapshot of what it's like to rent in Queensland.

When I lived in [REDACTED] in 2019 to 2020, our real estate was something of a nightmare. Our agent kept constantly changing, it seemed like there was a constant changeover of staff so we spent majority of our time there not knowing who our agent was because we dealt with about 4 different people at a time. Our maintenance requests were constantly ignored as well. We were living there for about 9 months when we received our first water bill. However, the property was not individually metered. It was a house and houses are usually individually metered; however, the house was once attached to the property behind us and we believe they never separated the water. They kept sending us the bills, and we kept trying to tell them to have a look at the bill they sent us and see that it's not individually metered. They wouldn't listen. They kept saying that because there's a water meter in the front yard that we had to pay. I tried calling them, emailing them and they just ignored me and

kept sending the bills. A month later, they issued a lease breach request saying we had to pay the water bill or vacate within 2 weeks. Tried getting in contact again. Nothing. Then, they started taking the water bills out of our rent and saying we owed rent. On my day off of work, I had to go down into their office and demand to speak to the principal of the company. It was the only way someone would listen to me. Finally, after months, they realising I was right: We were not required to pay water because the property was not individually metered

In its current form, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 will do little to improve my situation as one of the 1.8 million renters in Queensland. While this bill may be palatable to the real estate lobby, it completely disregards my experience as a renter.

While I'm pleased that the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill includes positive provisions for renters experiencing domestic and family violence, it contains little other reforms of substance for renters.

I urge the Queensland Government to take this opportunity to amend this bill and to implement real rental reforms that will make renting in Queensland affordable, secure and fair.

It's crucial that rental reforms in Queensland include:

- A genuine end to 'no grounds' evictions – providing tenants with long-term security in their homes without the risk of an unfair eviction at the end of their lease
- Allowing tenants to make minor modifications, like hanging picture frames or installing furniture safety anchors
- A real ban on rent bidding – banning agents and property owners from accepting amount above the advertised rent for a property
- Expanding minimum standards to include ventilation, cleanliness and insulation
- Stopping unreasonable rent increases by tying rent increases to general inflation (CPI)
- Ensuring prospective tenants have fair and honest information about the property
- Banning inappropriate or discriminatory questions by lessors
- Make it easier for tenants to have pets – by flipping the onus on property owners/agents to demonstrate why it's unreasonable for a tenant to have pet

These provisions are included in the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I urge the government to either support the Tenants' Rights Bill, or amend its own bill to provide real protections for renters.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]